

FACT SHEET

TT:Ag Ext 04:02

by: Usam Stephen, Agricultural Officer I

Housing and Equipment for Duck Rearing

INTRODUCTION

Proper housing and equipment are necessary for successful duck rearing. Ducks are generally reared close to dwelling houses. Locating the facility downwind from the dwelling house is therefore important for the farmer's well-being and comfort and also allows better ventilation of the facility.

HOUSING

The housing components for duck rearing are:

- a **brooding facility** (for brooding of ducklings). Provide 0.02 m^2 ($\frac{1}{4} \text{ ft}^2$) per duckling in the brooding facility at the one week old stage, that is, four ducklings per square foot. Provide 0.5 m^2 ($\frac{1}{2} \text{ ft}^2$) per duckling at the two week old stage, that is, two ducklings per square foot.
- an **enclosed laying facility** (with one nest box for every five laying ducks).
- a **pen or cage** (for fattening ducks). The ducks can either be reared on the ground or in cages. Provide approximately 0.14 m^2 to 0.19 m^2 (1.4 ft^2 to 1.9 ft^2) of pen space for each duck.
- a **covered shed** (for protecting ducks from rain and sun). Allow 5 - 6 ft^2 per duck.

Ducks may be reared under a semi-intensive system (figure 1) or an intensive system (figure 2).

SEMI-INTENSIVE SYSTEM

The semi-intensive system is suited for breeding ducks as they are allowed to have more physical activities. It requires a brooding facility, a laying facility, a covered shed and a pond.



Figure 1: Ducks reared under a semi-intensive system

THE INTENSIVE SYSTEM

In an intensive system of production, all the feed and water must be provided since the ducks are unable to forage (figure 2).

The intensive system of rearing is suited for fattening ducks for sale, especially where land space is limited. This requires a brooding facility and a totally confined covered pen or cage.



Figure 2: Ducks reared under an intensive system

If you are rearing in a pen, cover the floor with at least 4 inches of litter, preferably a mixture of wood shavings and sawdust. Keep the litter as dry as possible to prevent bad odours, fungal growth and build up of disease causing organisms.

If you are rearing in a cage, they can be placed side by side or one on top of the other if space is limited.

For side by side cages, construct the cage floor with either wood or steel spaced 2.5 cm – 3.8 cm apart (1" – 1 ½ ") to allow the droppings to fall through (Figure 3).



Figure 3: Steel reinforced wire floor of duck cage

If the cages are placed one on top the other, a shelf should be placed below each cage to collect the droppings. This can be removed and easily cleaned when necessary.

THE DUCK POND

A pond is not necessary for ducks reared for meat. However, it is necessary to construct a concrete pond for breeders.

The pond can either be round, rectangular or square.

A round pond is highly recommended as it can be cleaned more easily than a square or rectangular one. Corners of the square or rectangular pond could encourage build-up of harmful organisms, if it is not cleaned properly.

In constructing a round pond, the diameter should be 1.52 m (5 ft) and the depth 0.30 m (1 ft).

If you are constructing a rectangular pond, a pond of size is 0.91 m x 1.52 m x 0.30 m (3 ft x 5 ft x 1 ft) will be large enough for 200 breeders.

Construct the pond above ground level so that

rainfall run-off from the ground cannot enter into it. Pave the lip of the pond to prevent the water from becoming dirty when the ducks enter the pond. The pond should be fitted with a drain pipe to enable easy drainage and cleaning (figure 4).

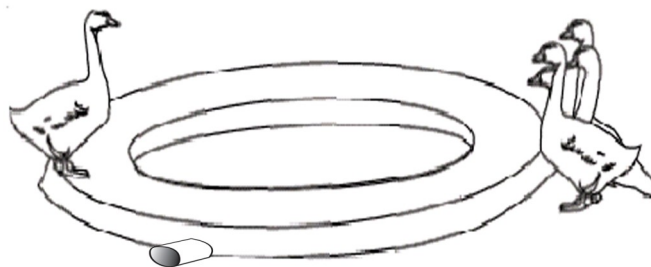


Figure 4: Duck pond fitted with drain pipe

NEST BOXES

Provide wooden nest boxes of size 0.36 m x 0.36 m x 0.30 m (14" x 14" x 12"). Make the opening large enough to allow only one duck to sit in the box (figure 5)

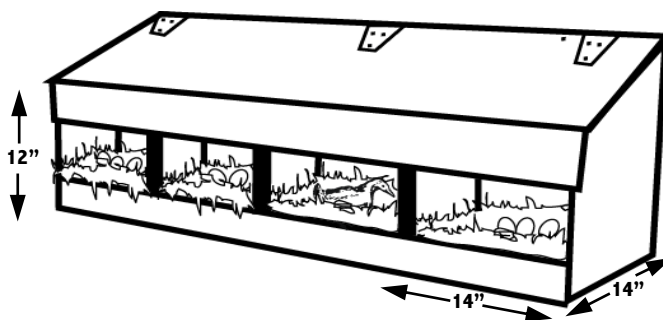


Figure 5: Ducks in individual nest boxes

The roof of the nest boxes may be slanted forward and hinged so that it can be flipped back against the wall to allow easy inspection of the eggs. Avoid space on the top, which encourages perching and will cause faeces contamination.

Place nest boxes off the floor along the walls of the pen. Use clean wood shavings or straw to make a layer about 7.5 cm (3 in.) in depth as a nesting material.

The nest boxes should be located in a shaded area and properly protected from the rain and direct sunlight. Number each nest box for easy identification during hatching.

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